Mingei Theory and Ceramics Today: Performance, ‘Nature’ , Artists and Craftspeople

Damen, Maxime

Mingei Theory and Ceramics Today: Performance, ‘Nature’, Artists and Craftspeople

Graduation thesis for MA Asian Studies at Leiden University

By Maxime Damen

S1940848

Supervisor: Doreen Müller

Second reader:

Word count: 14,999 30-06-2023

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Japanese Mingei (Folk craft) theory has played a large role in the world of crafts. Some have likened it to the Arts and Crafts movement that arose in Great Britain in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries. As a counter movement to a perceived deterioration of fine arts, the movement espoused the use of traditional crafts. This shares similarities with Mingei, which was influenced by some of the movement's pioneers. In the first decade of the last century Yanagi Sōetsu a.k.a. Muneyoshi (1889-1961) began developing a theory for Japanese crafts after his travels to Korea dating back to the 1910s. This started in the period he studied Western philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University from 1910 to 1914. Through the experience with Korean crafts he began developing ideas for applying his views and experiences to Japanese crafts. For, he saw Japanese crafts as underappreciated, with some of them even being called *getemono* (worthless/throwaway objects). The theory centred around the appreciation of objects crafted by the people (*min*) and why they required acknowledgement.

Currently, Mingei is still applied to various objects, granting them an air of 'authenticity' and 'naturalness'. These objects are often seen as traditional and close to 'nature' (*shizen*). Their traditionality stems from the use of techniques and shapes that are endemic to a particular region. Their relation to 'nature' is derived from the production process, where items are preferably made using what is close at hand, meaning, for instance, clay from the local farmers' fields, water from the river nearby, and wood from the pine tree in the forest; and people creating a Mingei object do not use their mind. Instead, they use something beyond it, the Zen Buddhist notion of *mushin* (no mind), whereby in a state of perfect exaltation one does not use their consciousness to perform an action. Yanagi Sōetsu has likened this experience of the craftspeople he was so fascinated by to channelling 'nature' or a god in this non-conscious state. It is then, 'nature' or a god making tea pots with potters' hands. As Mingei, as a malleable concept, has changed with the times, the way potters experience and use it has also developed. That brings me to the research question: How has Mingei theory developed when applied to Japanese ceramics?

The aim of this question is to delve into the effects ceramics and ceramicist have had on the meaning of Mingei, and vice versa. To this aim, I will focus predominantly on Yanagi's original theories because he has been highly influential in Mingei theory, his views can show how ceramicists

have adapted them, and Mingei organisations such as the Japanese Mingei Museum (*Nihon Mingeikan*) use his writings as a basis for their current views.[1]

I hypothesise the following. Regarding ceramics, Mingei is used to differentiate from non-Japanese works. This means that ceramicists can use their 'authenticity' by being part of a perceived 'folk art'. Elements that are not inherently 'folk', are still tied to Mingei and serve to reflect national, and possibly essentialist notions. As arts and crafts movements have cropped up the world over, a general notion of being part of the 'folk', and thus making more spiritually connected masterpieces, is not unique to this theory. That means, anything produced under the correct circumstances could be Mingei, but it is not necessarily because the concept came as an interplay between Japanese ideas about craft and art and Western ones. Being Japanese, following local traditions and being able to tune into a spiritual side of 'nature' that can be transferred to and expressed in objects is a way to apply Mingei to ceramics. That is, not the items themselves, but the manner of production is what makes them and their maker Mingei.

To answer the research question, I will, in chapter 1, approach the literature that has been written about Mingei and 'folk' ceramics. In chapter 2 I will analyse essays by Yanagi Sōetsu to define Mingei and analyse Mingei work after Yanagi Sōetsu's involvement with the theory. In chapter 3 I will look at work and comments of acclaimed Mingei artist and ceramicist, Hamada Shōji (1894-1978). In chapter 4 I will look at the work and comments of contemporary ceramicist Matsuo Haruka (b. 1974). In both chapters 3 and 4, an analysis of three objects will be performed, looking at what aspects of Mingei are reflected in them and which are not, potentially showing how the theory can be shaped by ceramicists.

Hamada Shōji is chosen as a case study because of his renown and ties to the Mingei movement. As an artist from the twentieth century who worked closely with Yanagi, his influences on Yanagi and Yanagi's on Hamada's cannot be overstated. He has been seen, also by Yanagi, as a model Mingei artist, and therefore should give insights into what it means to be such an artist.

Matsuo Haruka, a ceramicist active in the Netherlands, is chosen as a case study for her adherence to a traditional 'folk' technique, called *kigata Banko-yaki* for some of her work, while she enjoys multiple years of education from the Kyoto City University of Art in fine arts, and in textiles from the Rietveld academy, Amsterdam. Furthermore, her family has had ties to Yanagi Sōri (1915-2011), son of Sōetsu. As his son was influenced by his father, emphasising the 'natural', he sought out craftspeople to take inspiration from, which is how Matsuo learnt of this traditional technique. A

[1] "History," About, Mingeikan, accessed 23 June 2023, https://mingeikan.or.jp/about/history/?lang=en.

series of two interviews was performed to garner information regarding the ceramicist and her position on the theory.

Chapter 1: Discourses on Mingei and Ceramics

Introduction

Mingei theory has developed over the years, and thus authors have written abundantly about it and its effects. The following scholars have written on either ceramics, Mingei (folk craft) or both. First is Yūko Kikuchi, who has written mainly on Mingei theory and Yanagi Sōetsu himself. Then, there is Brian Moeran who has written about Mingei, ceramics, and their influences on groups of people. Then, Winther-Tamaki writes about the concept of 'earth flavour', how this aesthetic has come to be and how Mingei has aided in its persistence. Next, Meghen Jones has written about the developments of ceramics and the popularity of daily-use pottery. Gisela Jahn relates how ceramics have come to be seen as a category separate from fine arts in Japan, allowing a theory such as Mingei to spring up. Finally, Yamada Takehisa relates how the industrial developments that led to the diminishing of handcrafting pottery occurred.

Discussions on Mingei Theory

Kikuchi Yūko states that Yanagi presented his work as being wholly independent of the practices of Japanese tea masters, the English Arts and Crafts ideas by John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896), and European Modernists' ideas.[2] Brian Moeran agrees on the point that Ruskin and Morris have influenced Yanagi heavily.[3] On one of these accounts, there is an immediate flaw, as Yanagi himself finds tea masters were on the right track, and he appears to be placing himself in their lineage, which Kikuchi herself seems to identify.[4]

Kikuchi notes a work published by Yanagi in 1911, *Kagaku to Jinsei* (Science and humanity), which non-academic according to her, but it does introduce us to his ideas about death and his spirituality.[5] In his later writings, and in Mingei theory, these notions would play a role.

Yanagi was influenced by the philosopher Henri Bergson (1859 – 1941), who used the notion of 'intuition', saying that it is all that intelligence fails to grasp.[6] Yanagi's direct influences here can be

---

[2] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism*, London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, 1.

[3] Brian Moeran*, Folk Art Potters of Japan : Beyond an Anthropology of Aesthetics*, Richmond: Curzon, 1997, 21-23.

[4] YANAGI Sōetsu, "The Japanese Perspective," 1957, in, *Soetsu Yanagi : Selected Essays on Japanese Folk Crafts*, ed. Muneyoshi Yanagi, Michasel Brase, and Nihon Mingeikan, First edition, 2017, 138-139; KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 41.

[5] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 6.

[6] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 7-8.

seen, especially in the notion of *direct perception* (*chokkan*), where one sees an object and intuitively discerns its value without using the intellect. Furthermore, from Zen Buddhism *Mushin* (no mind) was adopted into Mingei theory according to Kikuchi.[7] The minds of those creating good objects were empty, allowing them to channel a god or 'nature', and therefore *mushin* is applicable to his notion. The author does not mention how this is part of the process of creating an object, as the book is dedicated to ascertaining the originality of the theory and less so its use.

Regarding *mushin*, the concept has been used to denote the highest possible state of consciousness in Zen, but being out of reach when its acquisition is focussed on.[8] Because one is trapped by one's mind if they focus on 'not having a mind', the state is attainable only through a different sort of unrestricted practice. Originally, associated mainly with Bodidahrma (lived c. 500, c. 600) and Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769), now the state is often found in works relating to martial arts. The term is used to emphasise the difference between the Western distinction between body and mind, as opposed to the non-dualistic idea in the East.[9] The concept is not fixed and adjusts to time and place, the constant being the idea of the body moving effortlessly.

Brian Moeran poses that Mingei appears in highly urbanised societies and emphasises the influence of Japaneseness on Yanagi's Mingei; meaning, his ideas relate to the Shinto notion of creative action (likely *musubi,* or divine spirit of creation), and the notion that anyone in Japanese society could create Mingei.[10] The first point about urbanisation is likely, as with urbanisation comes an appreciation of the non-urbanised, and non-mechanised, and so 'folk craft' comes into being. The second point relates Japaneseness to Shinto, and sees a correlation between something inside Yanagi's Mingei theory and Shinto. The third point can be central to why Mingei gained popularity, as it allowed all Japanese to be Japanese, and to create 'authentic' Japanese objects.

Moeran makes the point that Mingei can serve an ethnic function, as Yanagi claimed, that it is distinctly Japanese.[11] No other writers identify this ethnic function this strongly, which comes from Moeran wishing to steer away from making aesthetic judgements. This is very plausible because of the popularity of Mingei and its associated unifying function.

---

[7] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 9.

[8] Mike Kazuto Sayama, "Mushin, the Highest State of Consciousness in Zen Buddhism, (China, Japan)," ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1982, 2-3.

[9] Richard L. Light, and Jeanne Adéle Kentel. "Mushin: Learning in Technique-Intensive Sports as a Process of Uniting Mind and Body through Complex Learning Theory," *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 20, no. 4 (2015): 393.

[10] Brian Moeran, *Folk Art Potters*, 40-44.

[11] Brian Moeran, *Folk Art Potters*, 210.

Regarding the ethnic function of Mingei, M. William Steele finds that Yanagi used Mingei for his anti-modernist nationalist agenda while promoting plurality, which in turn was used by nationalistic politicians who he disagreed with.[12] For example, Yanagi's publications were critical of Japan's colonial policies of Okinawa and Korea, lamenting the waning of local expressions, while politicians used them to affirm their place in the empire.

Meghen relates the use of colonial terminology by Yanagi Sōetsu and how the writers Kim Brandt and Yuko Kikuchi have found issue regarding this, with Jones herself describing it as exposing problematic colonialist assessments of the Korean people as inferior.[13] *Hiai no bi*, or the beauty of sadness is the term used by Yanagi to describe what the splendour of Korean ceramics is. It is seen as problematic because the weakness found in Korean ceramics implies an inferiority. This, while Yanagi has spoken out against maltreatment of the colonised people, and has set up the Korean Folk Craft Museum in 1924. The inspiration for the Mingei movement in Japan came from Yanagi Sōetsu's visit to Korea, the sadness he saw can possibly be identified in the Japanese crafts he later looked at.

Gisela Jahn identifies William Morris' desire for all art to be treated equally, which is similar to Yanagi Sōetsu's wishes with Mingei. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Japanese potters, according to her, began to become more aware of their own East Asian cultural heritage, no longer following Western motifs. They also became more "politically responsible".[14] This was done by participating in the *Teiten*, the nationalised, government sanctioned art exhibition. As this exhibition was directly government sponsored, only works that were acceptable would be displayed, this was quite a nationalistic affair. Mingei objects were and are, also a representation of the good works that are produced in the country, not as 'fine arts' but more as a representation of what the common man can make.

Sarayama Mingei potters are perceived by Moeran to not necessarily be close to 'nature', as they watch television and get distracted by tourists, but outsiders interested in the pottery continued perceiving it as being tied to 'nature'.[15] Here, the Mingei requirement of having ties to nature puts potters and connoisseurs in the tough spot of having to suspend their disbelief or having to argue and search for the best way to be close to 'nature'.

---

[12] M. William Steele, "Nationalism and Cultural Pluralism in Modern Japan: Souetsu Yanagi and the Mingei Movement," in *Diversity in Japanese Culture and Language*, ed. John C. Maher, and Gaynor Macdonald, London [etc.]: Kegan Paul International, 1995, 37-45.

[13] Meghen Jones, "The Nude, the Empire and the Porcelain Vessel. Idiom of Tanimoto Kenkichi," in *Ceramics and Modernity in Japan*, ed. Meghen Jones, and Louise Allison Cort, 2020, 75-77.

[14] Gisela Jahn, "Modernising Ceramic Form and Decoration," in *Ceramics and Modernity*, 75-77.

[15] Brian Moeran, *Folk Art Potters*, 212-213.

Moeran continues: Yanagi Sōetsu identified Sarayama as producing traditional pottery in 1931. Potters used methods close to 'nature', they used *karuasu* powered by river water to crush clay, glazes made using 'natural' materials, pots were fired cooperatively in climbing kilns.[16] Once again, the processes are identified as 'natural', while the pottery itself is supposed to be traditional for this fact. The question is not posed whether or not this focus on production methods is the guideline for traditionality in pottery. The communal and the 'natural' are also closely linked, as the cooperative firing inside climbing kilns is what drives items to be 'folk' or otherwise.

Moeran closes by stating that anonymity is a constant in modern urban society, and as potters are handed down their techniques, so are they anonymous. However, the individual craftsperson is praised for their technique, like an artist, and so these craft practices are like art.[17] According to Yanagi, the skill of an individual craftsperson is not the focus, as what they produce is a result of their circumstances, and their ability to channel a god or 'nature', so it can never be fully perceived as their own skill. As an anthropologist, the production process is what he inadvertently hones in on, even if he does not mention so explicitly.

Discussions on Ceramics

'Earth flavour' is the unglazed texture found on ceramics fired in one of the six ancient kilns using pinewood, according to Bert Winther-Tamaki.[18] This aesthetic is closely related to the fascination with 'nature' in Japanese art. This 'natural' aesthetic is very similar to how Mingei aspires to include 'natural' materials in objects, have them be 'naturally' made and to have to have them look and feel like use-items. Winther-Tamaki goes on to identify the three main movements in 'earth flavour':[19]

1) Mingei,

2) sixteenth century ceramics appreciation, caused by the discovery and revival of Mino and Bizen, and

3) continued practice of the tea ceremony.

He also states that for Yanagi, the 'natural' environment and production were inseparable. Regarding these, Mingei slowly popularised between 1920 and 1950, and sixteenth century ceramics

[16] Brian Moeran, "Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of 'Tradition'," Journal of Design History 3, no. 4 (1990): 216-217.

[17] Brian Moeran, "Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of 'Tradition'," 224.

[18] Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Earth Flavor (Tsuchi Aji) in Postwar Japanese Ceramics," Japan Review 32, no. 32 (2019): 152.

[19] Winther-Tamaki, "Earth Flavor," 154-155.

appreciation was increased by the dedication of ceramicist Arakawa Toyozō (1894-1985) to that era. These developments caused an appreciation of the 'earth flavour' aesthetic.

According to Maruya, Yamashita and Uchiyama, pottery traditions are threatened by modernisation and traditional crafts are still tied to the influence of the environment.[20] This particular research was done near Sarayama, Kyushu, where *Onta-yaki* is produced. This type of ware has been popularised by Yanagi Sōetsu. Most potters that were surveyed did not use local clay. One used a *karausu* powered by river water to crush clay. 24 out of 38 used 'natural' water, meaning well, river or mountain water, to shape the clay.[21] The focus on the local and the 'natural' can be understood from a traditional Mingei perspective, as Yanagi preferably saw the use of materials close at hand, and taken from a 'natural' source. Because the potters use a myriad of different sources to create their products, they do not seem to be reliant on their location to produce, as the research pones. However, in their social structure, the deviation from particular standards marks certain households as not producing official *Onta-yaki*.[22] This shows an excluding side of the traditional group oriented 'folk crafts', possibly caused or aggravated by Mingei as an aesthetic that inadvertently demands a staunch continuity in style.

Mashiko 'folk' pottery is invented by Hamada Shōji, according to Brian Moeran.[23] As Hamada moved to Mashiko, he is likely to have influenced the ceramics tradition. As Hobsbawm states regarding tradition: [24] "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past." This means that any practice which is actively tied to any other historical practices can be an invented tradition, as the tradition is made.

---

[20] MARUYA Kota, YAMASHITA Sampei and UCHIYAMA Tadashi, "Community Spaces in the Minds of Traditional Craftsmen in a Pottery Village in Japan," Frontiers of Architectural Research 4, no. 4 (2015): 255.

[21] MARUYA Kota, YAMASHITA Sampei and UCHIYAMA Tadashi, "Community Spaces," 258.

[22] MARUYA Kota, YAMASHITA Sampei and UCHIYAMA Tadashi, "Community Spaces," 257.

[23] Brian Moeran, "Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of 'Tradition'," 213.

[24] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1.

"No other nation is engaged as much with pottery as Japan."[25] Meghen Jones identifies ceramics as connected to Japan, being important in daily life. Regarding to what extent the nation was engaged with pottery during modern times, she writes:[26]

1) The Meiji era government of Japan supported ceramics export (1868-1912).

2) The Taisho era (1912-1926) supported individualistic artistic expression of ceramicist.

3) The 1930s had a revival of Momoyama period ceramics because of archaeological excavations of kiln sites.

4) Post-World War II saw avant-garde developments of sculptural ceramic vessels, or *obuje*. These developments are substantial, and show an engagement with ceramics, but it is hard to say how large they are compared to other nations. The interest in ceramics must have been large enough for the development of Mingei theory to occur. To what extent the country is a potters' paradise remains dubious.

Gisela Jahn states that after the 1900 Paris World Fair, Kyoto ceramics became modern, as some ceramicists became artists instead of craftspeople. [27] To support this claim, she adds:

1) Art craft (*bijutsu kōgei*) became a category with the Imperial Art Academy Exhibition.

2) The forms of ceramics were shifted to align with modern expression of other artists.

3) Most scholars identify the turn to *bijutsu kōgei* at the Chicago World Fair of 1893.[28]

Yamada Takehisa approaches ceramics developments from an economic perspective. The influence of Western information and technology, as well as a focussed education system, and information hubs, caused the Japanese ceramics industry to boom during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These four main points are given as follows:[29]

1) Technical schools and trade association served as hubs of technology and market information to local industrial districts.

2) Daily-use, as opposed to artistic ceramics, increased with the rise in exports.

3) Japanese manufacturers studied processes in Limoges, France; Germany and Austria.

---

[25] Meghen Jones, "A Potter's Paradise," in *Ceramics and Modernity*, 2.

[26] Meghen Jones, "Potter's Paradise," 3.

[27] Gisela Jahn, "Modernising Ceramic Form," 69-70.

[28] Clare Pollard, "Tradition Modernity and National Identity," in *Ceramics and Modernity*, 28; Lisa Kaye Langlois, *Exhibiting Japan: Gender and National Identity at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893*, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2004, 49-50.

[29] YAMADA Takehisa; "The Export-oriented Industrialization of Japanese Pottery: The Adoption and Adaptation of Overseas Technology and Market Information," in The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization Another Path to Industrialization, ed. TANIMOTO Masayuki, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 218.

4) Technological school graduates and trades associations spread technical knowledge for developing new porcelain and established sales channels.

The government's influence over the ceramics world could be seen in the example of the spread of design illustrations to manufacturers in preparation for the 1876 Philadelphia exposition.[30]

Even among the rise in Western technologies and techniques in ceramics, Japanese designs were still distinguishable, according to Yamada, with the Morimura-gumi (currently Morimura Bros) company dispatching technical school graduates during the 1900s, who used their expertise combined with traditional Japanese technology and artistic handicraft.[31] This shows the developments of pottery from a non-Mingei perspective, which can be valuable. However, the text can be overly focussed on positive economic developments, and the familiar narrative of the juxtaposition between Japanese tradition and western technology. Since the technologies mentioned, such as high-voltage insulators and electric turntables, had an effect on 'folk craft' in their use and on factory pottery, causing Yanagi's demand for 'folk craft', the developments given are beneficial for my research.

Conclusion

Concluding, various scholars have written about ceramics and Mingei, including Kikuchi Yūko, Brian Moeran, Bert Winther-Tamaki, Maruya, Yamashita and Uchiyama, Meghen Jones, Gisela Jahn, and Yamada Takehisa. Kikuchi explored the Mingei and its various influences, including Japanese tea masters, English Arts and Crafts ideas, and European modernists. Yanagi's spirituality and the concept of *mushin* also come into play. The latter shows the importance of creation processes for Mingei. Moeran identified urbanisation as the cause of crafts movements, and how local identities as well as national ones are expressed through them. Furthermore, he highlighted how 'nature' is an influential part of Mingei, and notes processes such as using the river powered *karausu* to shape clay aids in garnering 'authenticity' as a potter. Similarly identified by Maruya, Yamashita and Uchiyama, who see modernisation as causing the disappearance of these traditional forms of pottery, whereas Moeran saw 'folk craft' theories rise with urbanisation. Winther-Tamaki identified the aesthetically rough 'earth flavour' aesthetic being spread and influenced by, among others, Mingei. Jahn's focus lay on the modernisation of pottery in early twentieth century Kyoto, which then caused Mingei to have a place as safeguarding traditional forms. Yamada analysed the economic side of ceramics that caused Japanese wares to be exported in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in mass production and a counter movement in Mingei. Overall, the discussions by these scholars

[30] YAMADA "Export-oriented Industrialization," 2006. 227-228.
[31] YAMADA "Export-oriented Industrialization," 2006. 236.

shed light on Mingei theory and the world of ceramics, and how they affect each other. However, what does Yanagi himself say about ‘folk crafts’?

Chapter 2: Yanagi Sōetsu's Mingei and Beyond

What is Mingei?

Mingei is a movement within art criticism that finds its roots in early twentieth century Japan. Yanagi Sōetsu started developing this theory on the importance of non-elite, non-named crafts and the value found within these during his travels to Korea. He visited the then protectorate of Japan for the first time in 1916 and finally in 1940, amounting to twenty-two visits.[32] His time there made him appreciate works by potters without a pedigree. He took this chance to bolster his ties with Koreans, and wanted to strengthen their national identity. Eventually he aided in the creation of the Korean Folk Craft Museum in 1924, which is still active today.

After his first visits, when back in Japan he had reconsidered what was important in arts. He travelled across the country, collecting objects that were deemed valuable by his personal metrics. A number of these objects were, after its opening in 1936, kept under the roof of his Japan Folk Crafts Museum. For, according to him, there was little appreciation of crafts during the early nineteenth century, and their proliferation would lead to a better world,[33] so he needed to struggle to foster this appreciation of whatever was not 'fine art' and was overlooked in art criticism. Even though traditional *raku* tea ceramics and other items that were highly valued for their relation to the tea ceremony were already appreciated, creations that were seen as more boorish and mass produced were taken into consideration by Yanagi.

Mingei continued to develop, both during his lifetime and after. One major change in his perception of Mingei works was his use of terms related to the spiritual, such as *chokkan* (direct perception), where one has to see and experience an object without interference of any prior knowledge, and *mushin* (no mind), where those creating an object experience an enlightened state during production through repetitive action and constant engagement with unvaried materials.

One thing that Yanagi continually highlighted was craftspeople's closeness to 'nature'. Leading to an understanding of Mingei artists also being tied to the area they live in, and therefore sharing closer links to 'nature'. They would use clay from nearby sources, feldspar from the local mountain and water from the river to moisten the clay.

---

[32] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 126-129

[33] YANAGI Sōetsu, "What is Folk Craft?," 1933, in *Selected Essays*, 78-79.

What Makes Mingei

In his 1933 essay 'What is Mingei,' Yanagi Sōetsu aimed to outline what Mingei is as a movement, what its goals are, what Mingei artists and craftspeople are, and what Mingei objects are. Yanagi does not give precise definitions about his terms. For instance, he states, what actually makes an object Mingei is it not being frivolously decorated, and being mass produced. Furthermore, these objects need to be sturdy. [34] These criteria are hard to pin down, as they are subjective. It can be said that having more paint means more frivolous decoration, but it can also be viewed as part of the aesthetic experience that adds to the utility of an object. The writer goes on to talk about the diminishing values of aesthetics, and only by praising Mingei and allowing it to increase in number, can the utopian state of beauty be reached. For, as he states, if only a few fine quality objects persist, most will be impoverished according to his standards of beauty, then beauty will not be able to rise to the top and permeate our lives.[35]

As more Mingei objects are required, so he says, then production should be steered by someone, who is not specified. Artists then produce blueprints for craftspeople to follow.[36] Yanagi says that there are no strict rules for the patterns and designs when artisans are creating and: "Folk art is the world of freedom and creativity."[37] If craftspeople create in unrestrained creativity, how then do those people leading Mingei, and Mingei artists fit into this? Craftspeople are restrained by the views of those leading Mingei and the artists guiding the direction of Mingei. Craftspeople do not have the academic knowledge to produce new works, but they have the beautiful skill of producing without thinking.[38]

Herein lies a central aspect of this essay, the belief in the beauty of the production itself. Yanagi himself states that objects should not be judged by the thoughts invoked by their appearance.[39] Instead, the mode of production seems to be most prominent. This mode of production is the art itself. Craftspeople that have no will during production, giving in to higher powers, create objects that inherit the beauty of the creation process. It is this belief in some sort of sincerity being perceivable within creations that is the core of Yanagi's idea. This sincerity is manifest in Mingei craftspeople's creation processes. Thus, the production process is a highly significant part of what it means to be Mingei. This means that, in reality, Mingei cannot be adequately described as

---

[34] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 76-78.
[35] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 78.
[36] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 82.
[37] YANAGI, "Beauty of Miscellaneous Things," 95.
[38] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 84.
[39] YANAGI Sōetsu, "The Japanese Perspective," 1957, in *Selected Essays*, 141; YANAGI Sōetsu, "Seeing and Knowing," 1940, in *Selected Essays*, 188-192.

an aesthetic movement about objects, but about something else. Something like the art in performance. The performance that craftspeople give when making their works is what is valuable to Yanagi. Only that which is pure in its creation can be deemed Mingei.

Another point given by Yanagi is the effective use of local traditions.[40] Items need to "stand within tradition," which should make craftspeople more creative than were they not to do so.[41] As such, elements of local tradition are a requirement for Mingei.

The Tea Ceremony

The tea ceremony, and predominantly *chanoyu*, as the most widespread Japanese variant, is unmistakably linked with ceramics. For tea ceramics are among the most highly valued objects among all Japanese ceramics. Their value is often based on the status of a previous owner. This process can be traced back to at least years after famed tea master Sen no Rikyū's (1522 – 1591) passing, with the advent of his successors. During his lifetime he had ordered tea wares, called *raku*. These were based on his own tastes and on the *wabi* (austere beauty) aesthetic. *Wabi* was popularised as an aesthetic during the sixteenth century, and would influence tea ceremony stylings. It was, and still is seen in the use of utensils that looked fit for commoners and by performing the ceremony in a small, unplastered room. As such, the objects used, the room they were in, the item in the *tokonoma* (decorative alcove), be they flowers or wall-scrolls should not be too extravagant. The tea ceremony wares followed suit. That is what *wabi* meant as an aesthetic principle: everything should look frugal and unpretentious. Once a Kyoto tilemaker was commissioned to produce these *raku* wares by the famous tea master, the connection of him to the ceramics was inseparable. [42] To this day, Rikyū's descendants patronise *raku*. This drove up prestige and price. People paid for objects because of their attributed pedigree. [43]

This is what brings me back to Mingei. As a movement, it strove to show the value of the mundane Japanese object. In *raku*, similar rugged qualities can be identified in many of the works produced under the Mingei banner. Meaning the identification of these *meibutsu* (famous objects) does not come solely from their visual character, but more from their predetermined status as valued objects. Mingei puts forth that items created in larger quantities are, simply because they are produced in larger quantities, not lesser than unique, one-off objects.

---

[40] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 81; YANAGI Sōetsu, "The Beauty of Miscellaneous Things," 1957, in *Selected Essays*, 92.

[41] YANAGI Sōetsu, '工芸,' *Kōgei*, Tōkyō: Sōgensha, 1941, 99.

[42] Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, 90.

[43] Christine Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry : Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, 59.

Yanagi has had a tumultuous relationship with Sen no Rikyū. He himself organised tea ceremonies with unconventional objects. These objects appear unconventional to the trained eye. For, if you assume tea ceremony objects should possess such austere stylings, non-austere ones will stand out. And, even if they are austere, if they are too dissimilar from the established, they are not fit for these ceremonies. He found that he held ceremonies closer to how Sen no Rikyū performed them in his time, and saw the tea master as role model, as stated in a 1927 essay.[44] Later, he would come back on these remarks, seeing himself as freer and less tied down by the government than Rikyū.[45]

As his relationship with tea continued, Yanagi took the notion of *sukisha* (tea masters), stating that the *ki* stands for lacking.[46] To my knowledge this is incorrect, as the character currently refers to collection and gathering, and leaning.[47] It is possible the character has been used in the meaning of 'eccentric person' or *kijin*. Whatever the case, these tea masters, or those who called themselves connoisseurs who simply enjoyed the pastime, were those who could appreciate things that were lacking and see the beauty of the imperfect during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. [48] Though, some see them only as industrialists who are "tea ceremony enjoyers",[49] or "men of taste".[50] Yanagi argues, this aesthetic is what has influenced the Japanese people as a whole. Because the tea ceremony inherently seeks the appreciation of the aesthetically crooked and imperfect, the idea of the tea ceremony of influencing all of Japanese society took root.[51] The Japanese spirit of loving the imperfect and quickly being able to recognise beauty is directly linked to the tea ceremony. These imperfections however, have gradually become more forced, which is far from the intent Yanagi seeks. Imperfection is supposed to stem from 'nature'. This is the love of unbridled freedom given shape, making objects that appear uneven or unrefined, which Yanagi exclaims to, in reality, be the most refined.[52] *Shibumi* (austere and refined), as an austere aesthetic is

---

[44] YANAGI Sōetsu, '工藝美論の先駆者について,' 工芸の道, 'Kōgei Biron no Senkusha ni tsuite,' Kōgei no Michi, 1928, 194-208.

[45] YANAGI Sōetsu, 利休と私, 'Rikyū to Watashi,' 1958, 114-123.

[46] YANAGI, "The Japanese Perspective," 138.

[47] "jn-50221," kanji, word, accessed June 9 2023, https://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/word/kanji/%E5%AF%84/#jn-50221.

[48] Seung Yeon Sang "Okuda Seichi and the New Language of Ceramics in Taisho (1912-1926) Japan" in *Ceramics and Modernity*, 130; Kristen Surak, Making Tea, *Making Japan Cultural Nationalism in Practice*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013, 80.

[49] KATO, *The Tea Ceremony*, 60.

[50] Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture*, 152.

[51] YANAGI, "The Japanese Perspective," 137-140.

[52] YANAGI, "The Japanese Perspective," 142.

the highest kind, and all other kinds pale in comparison. There is a reflection of what Yanagi wrote in 'What is Folk Craft?' about the use of minimal decorations and a pure, honest product.[53] That which is shaped in this way is more 'natural'. As such, there need to be more *shibumi* objects, and there needs to be more appreciation of *shibumi*. The love of the pure object, and being able to perceive it with a pure mind brings us in direct connection with the object, the object and viewer are one. This spiritual notion of Yanagi's gives meaning to objects and viewers as in a 'natural' relationship. Every person capable of clearing the mind comes closer to the item, for preconceived notions about them disappear, and only the viewer and object remain.

The Beauty of 'Nature'

"When one becomes a child of God, the flames of religious flames burn brightly. When one becomes a child of nature, one is encompassed by natural beauty that only nature can give."[54] These explicitly religious statements show in how much Yanagi's ideas about religion affect the Mingei movement. The notion of being close to 'nature' is directly linked to being close to spiritual beings. If one is closer to 'nature', they are therefore better. Once the mind has been emptied, nearby materials are used and work keeps flowing, and the production will be good and 'natural'. Therefore, so will the resulting product. Those who distance themselves from the frivolous and the unwieldy create 'natural' things.

The creation of objects should remain unfettered, while craftspeople are judged and monitored by others. These two incongruous elements cause Mingei to land in a conundrum. All that is made needs to adhere to certain standards, but once these standards are tested they can no longer be Mingei. Just as the patronage of tea masters caused, and continue to cause austere objects to be overpriced because of their austerity, so does the appreciation of Mingei objects cause them to become 'un-folk' and un-Mingei.

The Beauty of the Anonymous

Mingei is often linked to craft ware. As such, craft ware might be seen as the only beauty through this lens. However, Yanagi Sōetsu sees a core beauty, meaning anything perceived as good is beautiful. In this sense, seals, or likely in the case of Western art, autographs, add no value.[55] It is the work itself that is valuable. If one looks at a seal before looking at the work, this only distracts from the possible beauty in front of their eyes. Any work can be beautiful, but the works by individuals add

[53] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 76.
[54] YANAGI, "The Beauty of Miscellaneous Things," 92.
[55] YANAGI, "Seeing and Knowing," 194.

a layer of self-awareness that is unpleasant to Yanagi. This self-awareness makes it so that most works by individuals are less impressive than anonymous ones. This is why Yanagi exclaims the beauty of unsigned work over the signed. Considering this, the following conclusions can be surmised. Because works are signed, and artists know they are signed, they think about their own position, be it as an artist, expectations others might have of them, or their position in the world otherwise. These aspects filter into the work, making it more self-conscious, and not being free. If I take into account the earlier statements by Yanagi about 'nature', we can see something else. The creation of an object is perceived to be the most affluent when closest to 'nature'. One is, and the process is, closest to 'nature' if all one does is allow one's mind to be empty, making creation unfettered, and being guided by 'nature' or a god. By distancing oneself from the self, the works created are more pure and less tainted by ego. This ego is what stands in the way of beautiful creations. Within this idea of the theory an artist can still sign their work, be detached from their ego, and have created a work of Mingei art. The process, herein of course is what makes the Mingei 'Mingei', not the finished product.

The folk (*min*) part of Mingei plays an indisputable role. As the 'folk' as a collective is inherently opposed to the individual. Therefore any work deliberately presented as individual is not fully Mingei. An answer might lie in Mingei objects needing to be national (*kokuminteki*) and of the people (*minshūteki*).[56] As one can produce works in the manner that Yanagi appreciated most, with 'natural' materials, using local traditions, and by emptying the mind, as the artist in question does to a certain extent, they are still not completely part of the 'folk', as self-representing individuals.

As Mingei objects need to be daily-use,[57] they face a problem. Daily-use objects made into objects of appreciation automatically remove them from the category of daily-use. It is only a thin veneer of a perceivable daily-useness that remains when tested against reality. Seemingly, these items can be used daily, but in the life of people today, they are not. They should not be taken from their place as daily-use objects, but with the fear of Yanagi of them disappearing, there was and is little choice of leaving them be as special items, that have once, in an earlier iteration of themselves perhaps, seen the light of the kitchen.

What remains of Mingei is its aesthetic values, which in appears to be far from what Yanagi was aiming to achieve. However, as a movement that was object oriented, it is unsurprising that the remains of this movement veer more in the direction of the visual.

---

[56] YANAGI Sōetsu, '工芸,' *Kōgei*, Tōkyō: Sōgensha, 1941, 97.

[57] YANAGI, "What is Folk Craft?," 75.

Neo Mingei

Neo Mingei is the most recent development of Mingei, but it has only limited footing in people's perceptions. Even though it is used as a sort of promotion, as seen with these *gashapon* toys, as seen in image 1, the term Neo Mingei is used, outside of toys, by ceramicist Matsui Toshio (born 1955). One integral point Matsui makes is that Mingei is in fact an idea existing in relation to the West.[58] He wants to make Neo Mingei something local, but unrestricted by actual locality, meaning the actual ground does not matter, but the local tradition should take precedence. This brings with it the same problems that Yanagi's Mingei brings, its romanticism. There needs to be an essence of what a local tradition is in order for this tradition to be used and developed. Even if this means it is not a comparison between this place and another. Furthermore, he uses Neo Mingei to include 'nature' as a concept. By selling octopus pods, and telling people how to fish for them, to recycling discarded ceramics, he tries to channel some concept of 'nature'. His trying to develop local crafts comes in the form of working with craftspeople from various regions: lacquer in Kiso, masonry in Ogatsu, pottery in Shigaraki, and so on. As a Neo Mingei artist this is not far removed from the original vision of Yanagi. He is, as an artist, furthering the production of crafts by making new designs, which, in turn, can be produced by local craftspeople. His works are not actually reproduced by these craftspeople, but the design process is similar to how it was proposed in old Mingei. Matsui places emphasis on the distinction between Western artists and Japanese, as he states that the former have difficulty letting go of the ego.[59] Ironically, calling attention to this perceived lack on the part of Western artists, places the emphasis of comparison once again on the differences between Japan and the West. This makes Matsui's idea of Neo Mingei overtly Japanese. The Japanese artist can sever his work from his ego, according to him, which would then make his work more valuable, as it is more truthful. Yanagi would have no issues with that statement. Which brings me to the conclusion that there is no great distinction between Neo Mingei and Yanagi's Mingei, save for it being more focussed on the locality of traditions and less on the 'naturalness' of it and the state the artist or craftsperson is in when creating something.

[58] UEMURA Hiroshi, "From Romantic Localism to a New Aesthetics of Place - Rethinking Locality via the Example of the Neo Mingei Movement," *The Korean Journal of Art and Media* 16, no. 1 (2017): 28.
[59] UEMURA, "Rethinking," 30.

Image 1. Gashapon capsule toys. from 2017.[60]

[60] "Neo Mingei," Products, Kitan, accessed 14 May 2023, https://kitan.jp/products/neo-mingei/.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mingei is an aesthetic movement and theory, started in the first half of the twentieth-century and developed by Yanagi Sōetsu. His travels to Korea marked the beginning of his appreciation of non-elite crafts and everyday objects were at the centre of the movement.

The tea ceremony, and *chanoyu* in particular, influenced Mingei with its *wabi* aesthetic, even as Yanagi had a complicated relationship with the ceremony. He performed them with unconventional implements and originally saw the tea master Sen no Rikyū as an inspiration and an original Mingei proponent, while later seeing him as a government tool.

As requirements go, a lack of frivolous decorations, mass production and durability have continually been core aspects. Furthermore, locality, in terms of traditions and materials, was important as using these was 'natural'. During his lifetime, concepts surrounding the requirements developed, with an increased emphasis on an enlightened state, or *mushin*. The anonymity of craftspeople is what Yanagi saw as an essence of beauty, so an object could be judged without the baggage of a name. All of these aspects are elements of performance as they relate to the manner of creation and not the tangible or visual aspects of a creation itself.

Today, Mingei's aesthetic values remain, with its emphasis on austerity. This is however not emblematic of the process oriented theory that Yanagi put forth.

Chapter 3: Portrait of a Historical Artist, Hamada Shōji

The Life of a Ceramicist

Hamada Shōji (1894-1978) worked on ceramics in Japan with well-known British potter Bernard Leach (1887-1997). They had a studio near Tokyo on land provided by Yanagi Sōetsu. This put Hamada in direct contact with Yanagi. Eventually, Hamada and Leach moved to Cornwall, England in 1920 to set up a pottery studio there. This sort of studio pottery was not common in the region at the time, which mainly had mass pottery. The wares they made were in *raku* style and were well received. In 1923, Hamada had an exhibition in the Patterson Gallery in London, which affected his international image positively.

As a ceramics painter, he supposedly liked calligraphy more than painting, therefore some say that his style is more calligraphic.[61] During his third year of middle school Hamada would go to ceramics exhibitions at the Mikasa gallery in Ginza. Here he would experience Bernard Leach's work, and his appreciation grew.[62] In 1916-1920, after graduating from the Tokyo Higher Technical School, he joined the institute dedicated to making higher quality ceramics called *tōjiki kenkyūjō* (ceramics research hall) in Kyoto. Here, he would work together with Kawai Kanjirō (1890-1966), whom he had met at the Technical School, to make better quality products. This is where Maezaki Shinya's idea of him being a scientist remembered as a potter[63] comes from, as the work done here was not immediately artistic and aimed more at finding the right settings to produce the best quality products possible.

Hamada worked together closely with Yanagi in his Mingei exploits. For example, they, together with Bernard Leach and Kawai Kanjirō, held a Japanese folkcrafts exhibition at the Takashiyama department store in Tokyo and Osaka in 1934-1935. Later, in 1938 a sitting room, dining room and kitchen were exhibited, respectively designed by Yanagi, Hamada and Kawai for Nihon Mingei Shinseikatsu Tenrankai (An Exhibition of Japanese Folkcrafts for New Lifestyles) at the Hankyu department store in Osaka. These show that Hamada was involved in Mingei at an early stage, before the war.

---

[61] 裵 洙淨 (BE Sujon), "濱田庄司と朝鮮陶磁 —個人作家としての美意識, "文化交渉," "Hamada Shouji to Chōsen Tōji Ikojin Sakka toshite no Biishiki, "bunka kōshō," Journal of the Graduate School of East Asian Cultures : 東アジア文化研究科院生論集 5 (2015), 23.

[62] 裵 (BE), "濱田庄司と朝鮮陶磁, "Hamada Shōji to Chōsen Tōji," 23.

[63] MAEZAKI Shinya, "Unifying Science and Art," in *Ceramics and Modernity*, 91.

In the post-war period, Hamada gained a privileged position as someone who could sell his pottery well to the US through the payments in kind system, whereby items such as pottery products were shipped to the country in exchange for food and other necessities.

Hamada got praised by Yanagi as an individual potter who follows *jirikidō* (the way of self power), while also understanding the importance of *tariki* (Other power).[64] This runs counter to his theory, where individuality should be cast away in favour of the shared. His status as a Mingei potter seems therefore to stem from his connection to Yanagi, and his own participation in the movement. Furthermore, Hamada himself stated about his peer Kawai, that he had not yet fully developed, as his *tariki* was lacking, but he was carving out his own path.[65] While Kawai's pottery did not consist of use-items, he had become part of Mingei canon, as an important potter member of the movement. Even though he appeared to have veered away from the most important part of it, he was still Mingei. This shows how much say Hamada had regarding the ideas of the movement and the theory.

Hamada Shōji, together with Bernard Leach and Yanagi Sōetsu is credited with spreading 'earth flavour' according to Winther-Tamaki.[66] This 'earth flavour' is the unglazed style that is found on *raku* ceramics and other comparable Japanese wares. In 1952-1953 the three travelled through the US to give ceramics workshops, showing people how to make pottery in this style. Whether or not 'earth flavour' would have spread without them, as there was already a lot of pottery coming in from Japan through the aforementioned 'payments in kind', they no doubt influenced potters themselves by showing them the production process.

In 1955, during the first year of it being awarded, Hamada would receive the title of Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties (*Jūyō Mukei Bunkazai Hojisha*), more commonly known as Living National Treasure (*Ningen Kokuhō*) for his ceramics works. A title given to individuals for being exceptionally skilled in arts, crafts or performances by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Then, in 1968, he received the Order of Cultural Merit (*bunkakunshō*) for his ceramics, which the emperor bestowed.

It was during his time in England from 1920 to 1923 that Hamada was likely influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement of William Morris which would later steer him in the direction of Mingei, and possibly directly influenced the movement itself. After having worked in England, he moved to Mashiko to set up his own pottery studio, and aimed to use local resources instead of non-local ones as much as possible. "My work began in England, I learned much in Okinawa, and I matured in

---

[64] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 209.
[65] KIKUCHI Yūko, *Japanese Modernisation*, 217.
[66] Winther-Tamaki, "Earth Flavor," 163.

Mashiko."[67] With this in mind, in the village 100 kilometres north of Tokyo, in Tochigi prefecture, he could be closer to his ideal image of a decent potter, one who lives close to 'nature', and has to struggle to an extent, without the amenities of the big city.[68] Hamada died on January 5, 1978.

White Iron Glazed Teapot with Bamboo Handle

This teapot's base, as seen in image 2, is very smooth and is about the same diameter at the bottom as it is at the top, while the middle stretches out to create a large belly-like effect. The spout is quite simple, going from a very wide opening, connecting the body to it, to a slightly narrower mouth. The opening is largest at the bottom side of the spout. The lid is an upward rounded saucer, with a finial that goes from narrow to wide to pointed tip. The bottom has a large accumulation of darker colours. This is where the iron has had the most effect, being collected down below. The rest of the body features streaks of brownish-orange interspersed with an off-white colour, making for a calming desert-like vessel. The spout is the most monocoloured, seeming more light-brown than anything else. The glazing on the finial dripping down to the rest of the lid is a warmer brown, making it appealing to touch. This bleeds over into the waves following the rest of the lid, where the darker brown returns, but it is mostly covered up by the white. With some indented marks at the edges, giving it a homely feel. The part where the handle is attached has taken up some unique effect of the iron brushing, by having more stretched out marks across it.

The most strikingly Mingei aspect of this teapot is the use of non-attention grabbing colours. By being somewhat brown, the mind inadvertently goes to a place of homeliness, verging on mundane. The shape also has very few distractions, with just the finial possibly being perceivable as decorative, though it of course helps with lifting the lid. It is very much a use item, clearly meant for the use of pouring tea. The bamboo handle is reminiscent of older Mashiko pottery. The materials then, are the raw local clays that Hamada used and the glazes traditional to the area of Mashiko. These are as 'natural' to the region he was working in as they can be. The state of mind of the potter when he was working on this ware can not be recounted accurately, so I cannot say whether or not he experience *mushin*, or in another manner let 'nature' produce this work for him.

[67] HAMADA, *Retrospective Exhibition*, 15.

[68] 裵 (BE), "濱田庄司と朝鮮陶磁, "Hamada Shōji to Chōsen Tōji," 36.

Underglazed Iron Painted Teapot

This vessel, as seen in image 3, has a somewhat straight body at its bottom, only curving upward at it middle, then again, near the top, it moves quickly inward to make an almost straight line. These shapes result in the middle part of the body being only mildly curved as well, giving it a more serious look. This leaves ample space for the spout to be connected, with a flat body comes a flat connection to the spout. It is quite stern, were it not for the spout itself having a small drooping portion, as if it had a chin, while still reaching proudly upward. The handle takes the shape of a narrow gate that leads from the root of the spout all the way to the back of the teapot in downward angled lines, mirroring the shape of the body. The lid is austere and follows the rest of the teapot by not curving much, being topped off by a finial very similar in design to the one seen previously, going outward, then inward and ending in a tip. The colours of the teapot approach a white while being polluted by the rust of the underglaze. This effect causes the entirety of the vessel to be varied, with not one part looking the same as another. The finial, lid and spout have almost opaque paint, emphasising the tips of the teapot as its extremities. Most decorated is the top of the body, featuring a crop design in dark-brown, with honest straightforward strokes. Such a design places the piece in a narrative of 'nature' by reminding the viewer or user of the produce from the farmlands.

The design of this vessel is very much in line with Yanagi's Mingei. The simple straight lines of the teapot itself, the minor decorations referencing 'nature', even if it is 'nature' as controlled by man, and the mild colours are all there in service of shouting 'function'. The design of the teapot, with its straight lines, however does not remind me of wares found in Mashiko, where this item has been produced, and hints at more modern ideas. This, however can be seen as Hamada having the role of an artist potter that shows how other potters can innovate on their work. That he did not follow any local traditions in terms of the shape of the teapot is however definite. The same remarks as earlier regarding the 'naturalness' of Hamada's materials can be made, that he is supposed to have used local clay in its 'natural' state. Regarding his state of mind, it can be assumed that he was in a *mushin* state.

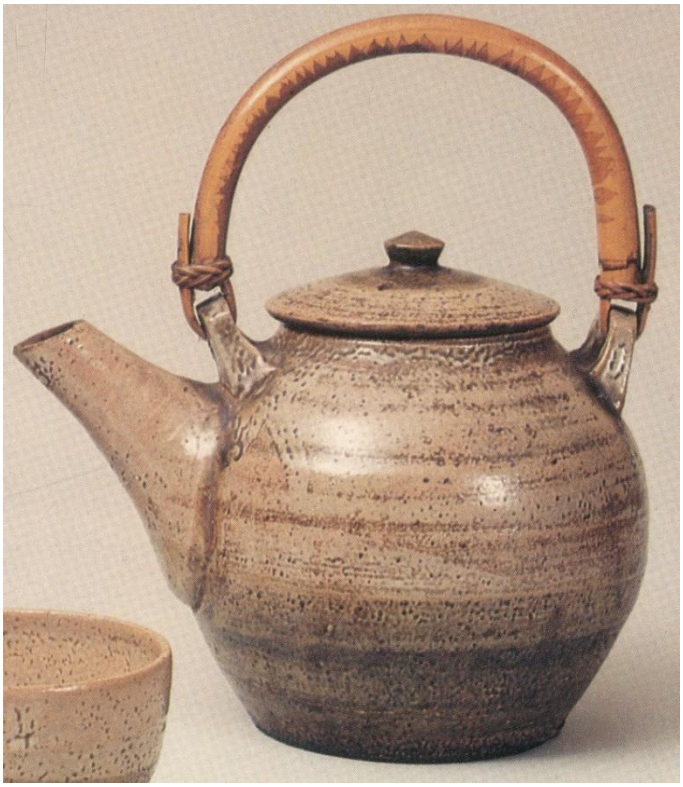

Image 2. Teapot with Iron Brushed White Glaze by Hamada Shōji, 1937[69]

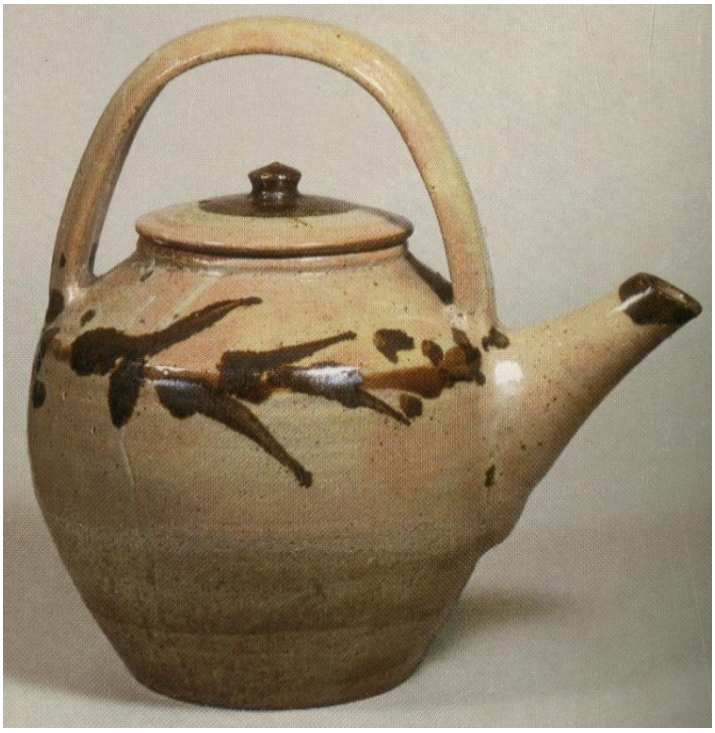

Image 3. Teapot by Hamada Shōji, 1942[70]

[69] HAMADA, *Retrospective Exhibition*, 41.

[70] HAMADA Shōji, and Yamanashi Kenritsu Bijutsukan*, Hamada Shōji : Tōgei Tewaza no Shikō, Kōfushi*]: Yamanashi Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1981.

Underglazed Iron Painted Teabowl

This tea bowl (*chawan*), as seen in image 4, shares a similarity with the teapot above, aside from the underglazed iron painting, with its painted on plant design at the centre of attention. The bottom of the bowl features a crackle pattern in its shape, going all the way down to its foot (*kōdai*), where the pattern is less pronounced. Its general shape is quite angled, consisting of straight lines. The roughness of this bottom side of the bowl makes it appear distinctly earthy, as if the clay was taken straight from the ground and retained its shape as a part of the bowl. The way the glazing interacts with the surface makes it appear starkly white, save for the crevices in the shape. The smoothness of the top of the bowls body juxtaposes the earthiness underneath. The texture is still slightly rough with miniscule indents all over, even inside. This top part is also more rounded than the bottom. The creamy white effect of the surface makes the upward angled plant appear to be rooted in the earth, peaking out into an off-white sky. At the top of the bowl, where the mouth connects to it, the *kuchizukuri*, the material falls over the edge slightly at some points.

This tea bowl is somewhat of a deliberate Mingei product. Referencing 'nature' in multiple ways, by showing the coarseness of the clay and having the plant placed in this coarse material 'growing' from it. As a tea bowl, the clear use-item aspect of it is present. Furthermore, the unobtrusive colour-palette means it is not overly decorated. Regarding the shape, this is, as in the previous case, not a traditional representation of Mashiko pottery. The straight lines prevalent here are more reminiscent of modern designs. Also, the use of the non-smooth surface at the bottom are very much a deviation from traditional pottery. Once again, these non-traditional expressions could even be emblematic of how artist potters have a place to shape designs for craftspeople. As mentioned previously, the state of mind when producing these items remain unclear. So, if 'nature' made them or not I cannot say.

Image 4. Tea bowl by Hamada Shōji, 1972[71]

[71] HAMADA, *Tōgei Tewaza*.

Conclusion

The Japanese ceramicist Hamada Shōji was influenced by English pottery because of his collaboration with British potter Bernard Leach, if only through learning of the Arts and Crafts movements from Europe. Hamada, Leach, Yanagi and Kawai Kanjirō would collaborate on multiple occasions such as during a folkcraft exhibition in 1934-35, and later in 1938 when they exhibited a sitting room.

Hamada was praised by Yanagi for following his *jirikidō* (way of self power), while understanding the *tariki* (other power). This, even though the ceramicist was using individuality to promote his wares, deviating from that essential anonymity of Mingei. Receiving the status of Living National Treasure (*Ningen Kokuhō*) in 1955 and the Order of Cultural Merit (*Bunkakunshō*) in 1968 emphasise how his status as an individual artist was strong.

The three selected wares show how an adherence to minimal decoration remained, conforming to the notions of Yanagi's theory. Also, the potter threw his clay multiple times to find the desired shape, which is similar to the mass production Yanagi mentions as necessary for *mushin*. However, in terms of shapes, the items deviate from traditional Mashiko pottery, which can be attributed to him being an artist potter and thus having the authority to expand on and change designs. Furthermore, as he was an influential part of the movement and the theory, he has had the opportunity to influence what is and what is not Mingei. He has shaped, as a ceramicist, the ideas prevalent in the theory.

Chapter 4: Portrait of a Contemporary Artist, Matsuo Haruka

The Life of a Ceramicist

Matsuo Haruka is a ceramicist and practitioner of the *Ōbakubaisaryū sencha* tea ceremony, which originated in the eighteenth century under Baisaō (1675-1763),[72] of Japanese origin based in the Netherlands where she moved in 2001. She was born in Tokyo and grew up in Mie prefecture and creates objects with the region's own *Kigata Banko-Yaki* (Banko wooden mould) technique. Not all of her work is produced with this technique however. As this is a local craft tradition, it can be argued that it is part of Mingei. She has since a young age been aware of Mingei theory through her father's connections, as he worked for Yanagi Sōetsu's son and industrial designer Yanagi Sōri. As such, her father visited craftspeople, like the man who taught her about the *Kigata Banko-Yaki* technique. She had an interest in arts and crafts, because of her father's work and her mother's activities as a weaver from Kurashiki, Okayama. Matsuo studied art for six years at the Kyoto city university, and afterwards studied design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam for three years. Her background roots her firmly in an art tradition, and not in a craft tradition. This does not however mean craft is necessarily outside her expertise.

The originator of the *Ōbakubaisaryū tea ceremony,* Baisaō was a practitioner of *sencha*, or steeped tea, as opposed to the matcha practices of *chanoyu* by Rikyū. Consequently, this is a less formal kind of ceremony than *chanoyu* and places less emphasis on famous implements, such as *raku* ware. As he was a priest, this ceremony has, since the eighteenth century, had its roots in *Ōbakubaisaryū* Zen Buddhism. Even so, proper use of utensils and the selection of them was disseminated based on Baisao's Sinophile tastes in the 1756 'Chats on Tea by the Azure Harbour' by fellow tea enthusiast Oeda Ryuho (died ca. 1756).[73]

She sees pottery as holding a special place in Japan and something that changes with the seasons.[74] Meaning that different objects are chosen depending on the time of year. The area she is from, Kimono, Mie, is well-known for its tea production, and depending on the type of tea, different cups and bowls are used. For instance, the smallest type is used when serving extremely thick tea. In

[72] Patricia J. Graham, "The Importance of Imports: Ingen's Chinese Material Culture at Manpukuji," in *Zen and Material Culture*, ed. Pamela D. Winfield, and Steven Heine, United States: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2017, 155.
[73] Patricia Jane Graham, *Tea of the Sages: The Art of Sencha*, 1999, 78-87.
[74] MATSUO Haruka, introductory interview by the author, Naarden, North Holland, December 22, 2022.

the region she grew up in, it was normal for farmers in that area to make one's own teapot using clay from the fields.

When visiting the craftsman who produced *Kigata Banko-yaki*, Seigetsu Iriyama (1922-2014), she got very emotional, because "Many people make teapots but almost nobody makes wooden moulds."[75] The moulds themselves are continually reused, and they are no longer produced today. The moulds are between twenty to one-hundred-twenty years old. As such, Matsuo collects moulds she can find and uses them to create her own teapots. One way of conserving the shape of the moulds themselves is 3d printing, which she pursues by reproducing them in plastic. One added benefit of the plastic moulds is that they can be used to make larger teapots than with wooden moulds, because the weight of the wood is too great. Nowadays, moulds are still sometimes found in sheds, but they are then given to museums, where they can no longer be used by anyone. The last two people producing these moulds are slowly giving up, with one of them being unprofessional as a mould maker and the other suffering from dementia.

As a side note, the difference experienced by the ceramicist between Japanese and Western pottery lay mainly in a difference in geology.[76] Because of the volcanic area, what is produced is mostly earthenware in Japan, whereas in Europe it is predominantly ceramics. When talking earthenware, the Japanese examples can be fired at between 1250 and 1300 degrees, whereas in Europe this is lower. The material requires different treatment. So too, the glaze, which is made with 'natural' materials, such as ash from trees, where glass is used to form enamel coatings. Feldspar and siliceous rocks or silica minerals are also traditionally used in Japanese ceramics.

At first Matsuo was using imported Japanese clay. However, she found this to be too wasteful and costly, so she started to look into ways of obtaining Dutch clay that suited her. She found a cow farmer in Deventer who could get her clay from his fields, right next to the Ijssel river. The farmer knew where quality clay can be found and pointed this out to her. This cooperation lead to a relatively local mode of production, decidedly more local than with her imported clays. Furthermore, she wants everything she makes with clay to be able to be returned to the ground when it eventually breaks.[77] So, Dutch clay should be returned to Dutch earth, and Japanese to Japanese earth.

The reason, according to her, that Mie had many crafts, is that Ise shrine is a pilgrimage site, and therefore pilgrims would buy and bring back items on their way to and from the shrine.[78] So

[75] MATSUO, introductory interview.
[76] MATSUO Haruka, phone interview by the author, Leiden, South Holland, March 22, 2023.
[77] MATSUO, introductory interview.
[78] MATSUO, phone interview.

because there is demand for specialty goods, they were produced. Her father was asked to make an exhibition about these local crafts around twenty years ago, that she sees as dying out. On one of her father's visits to craftspeople, Haruka accompanied him, and it is here that she met Seigetsu Iriyama and was bewildered. As a partially paralysed man, living with a brain tumour and unable to move half of his body, he could still produce these teapots. He taught her that the feeling of a work is more important than its perfection. An apt description of this is her example of drawing a peach: "[I]f I draw or paint a peach, the peach that is in front of me causes me to just draw or paint as you might taste the peach."[79] She identifies European painting as trying to reproduce the visual as if it were a photograph, and Japanese as capturing a different essence. The same goes for ceramics as well. They do not need to be like something, they need to have a spirit. This is quite similar to the way Yanagi Sōetsu describes viewing objects with direct perception or *chokkan*, or intuitive insight.[80] Using these, he is supposed to be able to see the inherent value of an object, and thus also if it has been produced in the manner he admires, without using the mind, channelling 'nature' or a god, using 'natural' materials that are close at hand, and with a ready-to-use shape. Some of these can of course be easily garnered from the visual or tactile dimensions of an item, while others cannot be tested with only the object. Similarly, the imperfection, even though the artist does not mention it as a striving, is something important, which, according to Yanagi Sōetsu is a goal on its own.[81]

Haruka Matsuo has described her own way of working as feeling zen or meditative, as something that can make her feel connected, especially in the context of the tea ceremony.[82] To her, the daily and the spiritual can best be connected in order for them to be effective. During the tea ceremony your movements and breath are vitally important. The repetitiveness of movements and not moving consciously is what makes the experience meditative. This is similar to *mushin*, which she also undergoes when making her ceramics.

In her experience, her teapot guru, as she calls him, had a life that was very interlinked, where everything had to do with teapot making during his day. She sees the importance of having a life that's lived with both feet on the ground, not just by living as a saint. She relates this to Alyosha, the youngest brother in Dostoyevsky's 'the Brothers Karamazov', who should live among the people according to the Elder of the monastery he was a novice at, for there he could do more good. Matsuo sees the life of a common person, in this way, hold spiritual value. "[I]t's really important that you stand on the ground and see what nature does, and that you feel the four seasons and take care of

[79] MATSUO, phone interview.
[80] YANAGI, "Seeing and Knowing," 188-192.
[81] YANAGI, "The Japanese Perspective," 137.
[82] MATSUO, phone interview.

yourself."[83] With this Haruka Matsuo underlines her previous statements and ties them into an appreciation of 'nature', which she sees as being part of the Japanese 'folk'.

When asked if anyone could be a ceramicist, Matsuo replied: "Yeah, I think so, same as anyone could be a cook."[84] Earlier she had used the analogy of cooking to be able to share a feeling with others, and here she uses it to say that anyone has the capacity to share through ceramics. Her philosophy is that if one has reasonable expectations, anyone is able to produce ceramics. As with Mingei, anyone can make crafts as long as the spirit is there.

When making anything, Matsuo finds the concept of *ma* (space between) very important.[85] In everything that is made, the space that is not filled gives more meaning to the creation. For instance, Japanese ink painters such as Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539 – 1610) use the empty space between the ink to create the image of mist-covered pine trees in mist in the Pine Tree Screen circa 1595. Matsuo does not know how this term *ma* reflects back on her own work, but she sees it as a crucial part of Japanese arts.

Matsuo does not position herself as a Mingei artist, but she leaves this up to others to decide. Idem for whether she is a craftsperson or not.[86] She makes useable objects, but whether they are used or experienced as use-objects is up to others.

When she was 25 she started studying in the Netherlands and giving workshops abroad (Germany, UK, Israel, Netherlands) using a wooden mould to make teapots using the *Kigata Banko-yaki* technique. Which is something she had been doing in her home country before. When she started holding workshops in the Netherlands, she noticed that people only watched her use teapots, even though they did not. She then started learning the tea ceremony to show people the objects' use. The tea ceremony gave her the realisation that it could lead to introspection and to a form of meditation.

Kigata moulds

Matsuo Haruka creates objects using wooden or plastic *kigata* moulds. Outside of this she also produces other ceramics. However, the focus here lies on the *kigata* items, as they are produced using this local craft technique from Mie, *kigata Banko-yaki*.

As can be seen in image 5, the *kigata Banko* moulds have eleven segments, eight on the inside with rounded parts, which follow the actual shape of the teapot, a rod to hold the pieces

[83] MATSUO, phone interview.
[84] MATSUO, phone interview.
[85] MATSUO, phone interview.
[86] MATSUO, phone interview.

together, and a square and a circle that are placed over the rod and the eight pieces to keep them in place. One of the larger rounded pieces has a small indent where the spout will be when the teapot is finished. The constructed mould is covered in a thin layer of clay, then the clay is pressed against the bottom firmly, extraneous clay is removed from the sides of the body, then the top. Once this is done, the spout is made using a mould like the one in image 7. Then, holes are made where the spout will connect to the body. After which, the spout is put there. Once the process is done, the mould can be removed, as seen in image 8.

Image 5. Constructed kigata Banko moulds

Image 6. Deconstructed Kigata Banko mould.

Image 7. Spout moulds

Image 8. A mould being removed

Greyish-Brown Teapot Made With Clay From Deventer

The following teapot, as seen in image 9, was made using clay from Deventer and a *kigata Banko* mould. Further, the petite size of the item, at only little over 7 centimetres high and about 6 centimetres wide. One of the first notable features of this teapot are the seven flat surfaces on its sides. The eighth is only broken up by the spout. The spout has a peculiarity, as at its base, a seem is visible where the body flows connects to it. Presumably, this excess material is a result of the mould having an opening to allow for the placement of the spout, causing more clay to be present than if it were made out of one whole. The handle is not invasive, maybe even simple, and only has a small knob at its highest point. At the handle there is also evidence of excess clay, since between the body and it is a collection of material as well. The cover however, is intensely smooth and the finial leaves no marks on it, as it glides smoothly into the top of the teapot. The cover features eight angles to align with those of the surfaces of the teapot under it. The finial has a curved and playful shape, with an attached ring, marking its decorative function. Finally, the greyish-brown glazing is slightly coarse with darker spots at protrusions and indents, helping define the shape of the pot even more. This glaze also makes the surface have a pleasant warmth to the touch because of its slightly textured feel.

As a teapot, it is very elegant and somewhat decorated, going strictly by Yanagi Sōetsu's terms, this item would be too audacious. However, as discussed earlier, it has been made using local clay from Deventer, which makes it a more 'natural' item. Then again, the added feature of the ring puts the item beyond the completely use-oriented sphere that strict Mingei theory seeks to appreciate. Still, it is a use-object, where the use is clear, meaning a development of Mingei is evident here.

Image 9. Banko-yaki by Matsuo Haruka

White Glazed Teapot Made With Clay From Deventer

The teapot below, as seen in image 10, accompanied by small plates and teacups, is noticeably more decorated than the previous example. The first big difference is the pristine white glaze, which gives the pot a completely different feel. The glaze is more distant and cold because of its reflective surface and its monochrome colour. The flowers are done in a reddish pink, next to the green leaves, both atop the cover. These give it more variation in colour and grab the attention, together with the gold covered finial and spout mouth. As the amount of gold is low, they have room to breathe among the mainly white vessel. Then, the shape. This teapot is less coarse than the earlier example, as it does not have the excess clay where the handle and spout meet the body. Still, the seven sides are present, which are a distinctive marker of the *kigata Banko* mould. The body extends high as well, which is caused by the mould ending in such a manner. The handle is refined as it has no decorative elements but stays purely functional. The spout similarly does not have any added parts, it simply curves upward and then slightly downward, from a wide opening to a narrow mouth. The cover is smooth, decorated on this smooth surface by the aforementioned flowers and leaves, which are pleasant and inobtrusive. The finial is shaped like a small bridge connecting the two ends of the cover, which is emphasised by its gold colour.

This pot is less focussed on the functional than the previous example. The gold, and the decorative aspects of the flowers and leaves take away from the pure function of the shape. As it is still a functional object, made with the aim of being a functional object, it is not something completely un-Mingei, like an *objet* would be. The locally sourced clay still give it this ‘natural’ aspect. As does Matsuo’s experience of feeling *mushin* when making such items. Both of which are also vital parts of Mingei.

Image 10. Banko-yaki by Matsuo Haruka

A White Glazed Kyūsu Teapot Made With Clay From Deventer

This white glazed vessel, as found in image 11, with checkered pattern, *kachō* (birds and flower) design and a golden decoration on top, has the most amount of decoration out of these three examples. The design pattern of flowers and birds is applied to the teapot by using embroidery, such as seen in image 12. A notable difference with the body is that it is rounded and does not have the signature seven sides found on the previous two examples. It does still have the long opening where the lid goes, coming from the shape of the mould. At this opening, on the body, evidence of carving can be perceived. The connection to the spout is quite abrupt, as there is a circular shape around it, coming out of the body. The spout itself does not rise much and slowly bends downward. The handle is attached to two rings protruding from the body and is made of cut and neatly knit and folded bamboo, tied together by even finer bamboo at both ends. The cover has a phallic object with two ball-shaped ones underneath, covered in gold. The lid itself gives off a quite strong impression as it rises almost high enough to reach the opening it rests in. The bird and flower decoration together with the checkered pattern already grab the attention with their neat and finely designed shapes. However, the decoration on top shouts at me to look at it, covered in gold and having a daring shape.

This item, even though it does use the *kigata Banko-yaki* technique, strays somewhat from the function-oriented mentality of Mingei. The object is not automatically un-Mingei. As mentioned earlier, the absence of active thought when making an item and using local resources are also important facets. Furthermore, the use of the item remains unrestricted by its design, as it is still a functional teapot, just not with an overtly traditional design.

Image 11. A White Glazed Kyūsu Teapot by Matsuo Haruka

Image 12. Embroidery with man and flower design by Matsuo Haruka

Conclusion

Matsuo Haruka is a ceramicist with a background in art and design and a connection to arts and crafts, with a mother who was a traditional Kurashiki weaver and a father who worked for the son of Yanagi. Because of her father's connections she met her teapot 'guru' who taught her about a local technique. Culminating in her working with the mould based *kigata Banko-yaki* technique from Mie prefecture to produce pottery.

Because of the current meagre state of production of the moulds, with only one or two craftsmen still creating them, she 3d prints her own based on existing ones she has collected. These efforts function to preserve the local tradition and she also helps perpetuate it in workshops. Her work has led her to use local clay from the Netherlands, where she currently lives, for the sake of the environment and for 'nature'. Using local traditions and local materials make the production of objects more Mingei. Furthermore, her using the objects she makes in her own tea ceremonies, making them use objects and experiencing 'zen' feelings, that she describes as corresponding to *mushin*, aid this.

As for the three objects examined, they, bar one, have no extravagant decorations, which would make that one not strictly Mingei. However, two aspects conform to Yanagi's original concept for Mingei. As she uses all three teapots during her ceremonies they serve a function. Furthermore, there is the fact that they are made using moulds, which makes them reproducible traditional use objects. Her use of local clay and her experiencing *mushi* also tie into this. As the ceramicist's views of Mingei have influenced her understanding of good ceramics, in them being traditional use objects, she has in turn used parts of this theory to create diverging objects that still adhere to many of its original tenets.

Conclusions

At the outset, I introduced the ideas of Mingei as being centralised around Yanagi Sōetsu, and, as the figurehead of this movement, he has been highly influential. Over the course of time, however, his ideas have changed to be more general. The term can be applied to objects that have an aesthetic that is Japanese 'folk'. It has moved from a much encompassing theory on the performance of the creation of 'folk craft' to a style. This is far removed from many aspects that the writer outlined in his initial ideas. As people like Kikuchi have pointed out, the vagueness of some if not many of these notions allow for numerous interpretation on the part of the reader of Yanagi's essays. How has Mingei theory developed when applied to Japanese ceramics? Can be answered in a narrow scope only, because of this fact. This is why I mainly focussed on Yanagi's writings to measure how it developed.

The audience of Mingei, even those in passing, is likely to know eminent examples of the movement such as Hamada Shōji, briefly outlined earlier. The examples given do not perfectly fit the three most important criteria for Mingei identified before, but the ceramicist has shaped how the theory can be understood as an artist potter. The three most important criteria, aside from being a use-item, for Mingei identified at the onset were: the use of 'natural' materials, the use of local traditions, and a lowered state of consciousness (or *mushin*). The artist uses materials found close-by, in a largely unaltered state, which is what makes things 'natural' to Yanagi. Therefore, this point can be considered met. He uses a number of local Mashiko traditions in his designs, such as the use of a bamboo handle. His participation with local craftspeople has also influenced the direction crafts would go in, so Hamada helped shape tradition. As an artist potter he also had to design ceramics, making it unlikely and unprovable that he was in a state of *mushin* when designing. However, his state when throwing clay was different. He did follow the shape of a single item repeatedly until he got the design he wanted, approaching the sort of mass production that was required for this state of consciousness as according to Yanagi. Hamada, from the first half of the twentieth century into the second half, shaped what it means to be Mingei and his position as a Mingei artist has meant that he can shape what the local pottery from his region looks like, serving as an example.

Then, Matsuo Haruka, as a contemporary artist who does not necessarily place herself in the Mingei canon, has aspects of her work reflective of the movement. She uses a local traditional technique in *kigata Banko*, which is not local to where she currently works in the Netherlands, but local to the Mie prefecture. Furthermore, she sources her own clay from the fields of a farmer in the Deventer area in the Netherlands. Which corresponds to the non-area-bound Neo Mingei. Also, she

experiences a state of *mushin* when producing ceramics, being in a lowered consciousness. Similarly to Hamada, the state of Mingei is incongruous with the design stage, so it is unlikely to occur then. In her own experience, Mingei is used as a way to understand the processes of working on arts and crafts. As it is up to others to decide whether or not her work falls into that category and she does not display this on any promotional material, it is not used for marketing purposes. By using traditional techniques while not labelling herself explicitly as an artist who is part of this movement she arguably comes closer to Yanagi's ideals. For she is following ideas of Mingei without actively getting involved in them, which would make her activities more pure and more connected to a god and 'nature' than those who do. Again, this is troubling to measure because of the essentialist notions present in the ideas. Her methods have deviated from some of Mingei's original tenets, even though she continues to use a local tradition for the sake of its perpetuation, which is a manner of using the theory.

Whereas in the past, the ideas of Yanagi Sōetsu reflected mainly an appreciation of the process of production, or a performance, currently Mingei is used predominantly to denote an aesthetic style of 'rurality' and 'nature'. The contemporary artist Matsui Toshio tries to rectify this or reconnect to this old Mingei by going back to the roots of the movement as an appreciation of 'nature' itself at the basis, and the processes people have in representing their love for 'nature'. However, in his pursuits he often falls into the same trap as others, digging more into the superficial representations of varying local styles by cooperating with artists.

As such, currently Mingei is used to mean objects representing 'nature', or objects representing the past of humans, e.g. tradition. In my analyses I have incorporated both objects and people to be as holistic as possible. However, because I used my own interviews with the contemporary artist and contrasted them with information of Hamada Shōji from the past, there is a difference in source type. Finally, the emphasis of the movement has come to steer away from the processes themselves, focussing more on the finished product, only possibly featuring a story about how they came to be made, and came to be connected to 'nature'.

References

Anderson, Jennifer L. An Introduction to Japanese Tea Ritual. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

裵 洙淨 (BE Sujon). “濱田庄司と朝鮮陶磁 —個人作家としての美意識. ”文化交涉.“ “*Hamada Shouji to Chōsen Tōji Ikojin Sakka toshite no Biishiki. “bunka koushou.”* Journal of the Graduate School of East Asian Cultures : 東アジア文化研究科院生論集 5 (2015).

Graham, Patricia Jane. *Tea of the Sages: The Art of Sencha*. 1999.

Guth, Christine. Art, Tea, and Industry : Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1993.

HAMADA Shōji, Tokyo The National Museum of Modern Art, and Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan. *The Retrospective Exhibition of Shôji Hamada = Hamada Shōji ten*. Tōkyō: Nihon Keizai Shinbun, 1977.

HAMADA Shōji, and Yamanashi Kenritsu Bijutsukan. *Hamada Shōji : Tōgei Tewaza no Shikō*. Kōfu-shi]: Yamanashi Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1981.

Mingeikan. “History.” About. Mingeikan. Accessed June 23, 2023. https://mingeikan.or.jp/about/history/?lang=en “Neo Mingei.”

Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence, and Newton, Francis. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Dictionary. “jn-50221.” Kanji. Word. accessed June 9, 2023. https://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/word/kanji/%E5%AF%84/#jn-50221.

Jones, Meghen and Cort, Louise Allison. *Ceramics and Modernity in Japan*. Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2019. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429031298.

KATO Etsuko. *The Tea Ceremony and Women's Empowerment in Modern Japan : Bodies Re-Presenting the Past*. London [etc.]: Routledge, 2004.

Kazuto Sayama, Mike. “MUSHIN, THE HIGHEST STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ZEN BUDDHISM. (CHINA, JAPAN).” ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1982.

KIKUCHI Yūko. Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism. London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

Kitan. “Neo Mingei.” Products. accessed May 14, 2023. https://kitan.jp/products/neo-mingei/.

Langlois, Lisa Kaye. *Exhibiting Japan: Gender and National Identity at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2004.

Light, Richard L., and Jeanne Adéle Kentel. “Mushin: Learning in Technique-Intensive Sports as a Process of Uniting Mind and Body through Complex Learning Theory.” *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 20, no. 4 (2015): 381–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2013.868873.

MARUYA Kota, YAMASHITA Sampei and UCHIYAMA Tadashi. “Community Spaces in the Minds of Traditional Craftsmen in a Pottery Village in Japan.” *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 4, no. 4 (2015).

Moeran, Brian. *Folk Art Potters of Japan : Beyond an Anthropology of Aesthetics*. Richmond: Curzon, 1997.

Moeran, Brian. “Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of ‘Tradition’.” *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 4 (1990).

Pitelka, Morgan. *Handmade Culture*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2005.

Steele, M. William. “Nationalism and Cultural Pluralism in Modern Japan: Souetsu Yanagi and the Mingei Movement.” in *Diversity in Japanese Culture and Language*. Edited by John C. Maher, and Gaynor Macdonald. London [etc.]: Kegan Paul International, 1995. 27-48.

Surak, Kristen. *Making Tea, Making Japan Cultural Nationalism in Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.

UEMURA Hiroshi. “From Romantic Localism to a New Aesthetics of Place - Rethinking Locality via the Example of the Neo Mingei Movement.” *The Korean Journal of Art and Media* 16, no. 1 (2017).

Graham, Patricia J., “The Importance of Imports: Ingen’s Chinese Material Culture at Manpukuji.” in *Zen and Material Culture*. Edited by Pamela D. Winfield and Steven Heine. United States: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190469290.003.0006.

Winther-Tamaki, Bert. “Earth Flavor (Tsuchi Aji) in Postwar Japanese Ceramics.” *Japan Review* 32, no. 32 (2019).

YAMADA Takehisa; “The Export-oriented Industrialization of Japanese Pottery: The Adoption and Adaptation of Overseas Technology and Market Information.” in *The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization Another Path to Industrialization*. Edited by TANIMOTO Masayuki, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

YANAGI Muneyoshi, Michael Brase, and Nihon Mingeikan. *Soetsu Yanagi : Selected Essays on Japanese Folk Crafts*. First edition., 2017.

YANAGI Sōetsu, ‘工芸,‘ *Kōgei*, Tōkyō: Sōgensha, 1941.

YANAGI Sōetsu, ‘工藝美論の先駆者について.’ 工芸の道. ‘Kōgei Biron no Senkusha ni tsuite.’ *Kōgei no Michi*. 1928.

YANAGI Sōetsu, 利休と私, ’Rikyū to Watashi,’ 1958, 114-123.